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THE TRUE GLORY OF THE CHURCH.

A SERMON,

DELIVERED IN

ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, RAHWAY,

IN THE DIOCESE OF NEW-JERSEY,

ON THE

150TH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

BY

REV. EDWARD W. PEET,
RECTOR.

In memory of
REV Wm. M. CARMICHAEL D D

NEW-YORK:
STANFORD AND SWORDS, 137, BROADWAY.
1851.

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Rahway, June 27th, 1851.

Rev. E. W. Peet:

Dear Sir:—The undersigned, vestrymen of St. Paul's Church, Rahway, and members of the congregation, were deeply interested in the facts respecting the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, as they were presented by you on Sunday last; and being desirous of preserving them for the benefit of ourselves and families, we solicit of you a copy of the discourse for publication.

Respectfully yours,

NATHAN THORP, *Warden.*
LEWIS DRAKE,
J. L. SMITH,
J. B. CLARKE,
BENJ. M. PRICE,
JOEL CLARKSON,
E. F. W. GRAY,
E. Y. ROGERS,
FRANCIS LA BAW,
EZRA AYRES,
Vestrymen.
E. T. HORNBLOWER.
AUGUSTUS THORP.
JAMES ROSSITER.
A. VAN INGEN.

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NEW YORK

TO MY BELOVED PARISHIONERS,

Whose unvarying kindness and tenderness to myself and family, in sickness and in health, and whose care for the Church of God, have made my residence among them for more than seven years, one of the happiest periods of my life; this sermon, with earnest prayer for their spiritual good, is affectionately inscribed,

By their friend and pastor,

EDWARD W. PEET.

Rectory of St. Paul's Parish,
July 1, 1851.

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SERMON.

PSALM XLIV. 1.

We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.

We all require to be constantly reminded of great truths and principles, by recalling the events to which they gave birth. If we do not thus recall them, we forget the events, and so lose sight of the truths which they most forcibly teach. The Passover, and other celebrations of the Jewish Church, were designed to perpetuate the memory of their deliverance from captivity, and to illustrate the great mercy and protecting power of God. The Jubilee also, with all its attendant blessings of liberty, was to be commemorated once in fifty years. On the same principle, the great events in the life of our blessed Saviour, his birth, death, resurrection, and ascension, are duly observed in the Christian Church. The same principle is recognised in the past histories and present customs of all nations, and by our

own, in the anniversary of what is called "the day of the nation's birth." Our own Church, therefore, is fully justified in making the present a day of joyful remembrance of the past mercies of Divine Providence, in putting into the hearts of our forefathers to send us the blessings of the Gospel, and to provide for the salvation of our souls.

Our thanks are especially due to the venerable Bishops of the Church of England, for calling our attention to this, the third jubilee of a noble institution, founded by Christian piety and love. We did not know before, to whom, under God, we were so much indebted; and, in the acknowledged dearth of information upon this point, I feel assured that I shall best perform my duty by presenting briefly the facts respecting the origin of the Society, its objects and principles, the character of its missionaries, and the success which has attended their labors.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was formed 150 years since, and received its charter at that time from King William III. It was among the last public acts of his eventful life.* "He had been the instrument of rescuing the Protestant religion in Europe by saving the Church of England;" and this act certainly was not the least glorious, that he should aid in transmitting to us such a legacy as we now have in the Church of

* Historical Account of the Society, for the first 27 years of its existence, by David Humphrey, D. D., secretary; to whom the author is indebted for the facts mentioned in this Discourse.

our best affections and prayers. Nearly one hundred persons, of the bishops, clergy, and laity, who stood foremost among the great, the wise and the good of their day and generation, united in the formation of the Society. "The end proposed in their organization," says their first historian, "was of the highest importance, the propagation of the Christian faith, and the salvation of men's souls."

The minds of devout and good men had been greatly agitated, many years before, by the numerous reports which reached them, of the spiritual destitution that prevailed in the colonies. The great Robert Boyle, a man "equally distinguished for his eminent piety and universal learning," was among the foremost in his zeal to remedy the evil. After much ineffectual labor to that end, he died, but in his dying bequest, he provided according to his ability, for sending the Gospel to the colonists and to the heathen. At that time there was not a clergyman of the Church of England, in North or South Carolina, in Delaware, New Jersey, nor in the whole of New England. It was asserted that the "gloom and horror of an Indian darkness" covered many of the fairest portions of the land. And afterward, at the time of the formation of the Society, the spiritual condition of the Colonies was scarcely less deplorable. The Governors of the various provinces wrote in bitter terms of the ignorance, immorality, and irreligion of the people, except in some favored portions of New England, and represented that "most of the inha-

bitants were falling away into the worst forms of atheism and infidelity." There were scarcely any ministers of any denomination. A few clergymen of the Church of England were scattered, at vast intervals, here and there in Maryland and Virginia, where the Church was supported by law. There was a congregation in Pennsylvania, and one in New York, and a mere foothold had been secured in the city of Boston. In the mean while, the population was rapidly increasing, and extending in every direction. To a doubting heart, the prospect seemed discouraging in the last degree; but what a noble field it was; and what vast results are likely to flow from the labors and prayers of those who were then the children of God by faith!

With firm, trustful, and believing hearts, the founders of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, looked upon the field, and calmly entered on their labors. They had no funds, but they had faith in God, and in the charities of Christian souls for time to come. Each member contributed generously himself, and the treasury, thus commenced, was speedily increased, by the exertions of the friends of the Society, in all parts of England. With its charter, its funds, and its faith in God, the Society was now ready for its responsible duties. These were of no ordinary kind.

First of all, it was necessary to obtain *fit* persons to go forth as its missionaries. Of course it would not do to send out weak, or time-serving, or un-

learned, or worldly men. The Society well knew, that, for this sacred trust, they required strong men and true, learned, self denying, and devoted; and, to human view, they left nothing undone to accomplish an object so desirable. Their first act was earnestly to request all the Bishops of the realm to publish, throughout their respective dioceses, the testimonies which would be required from all applicants for missionary stations; and the Society itself, "did most earnestly beseech all persons concerned, that they recommend no man out of favor or affection, or any other worldly consideration; but with a sincere regard to the honor of Almighty God, our blessed Saviour, as they tender the interest of the Christian religion, and the good of men's souls."

The testimonials required of the missionaries respected "their age, their condition of life, their temper and prudence, their learning and sober conversation, their zeal for the Christian religion, their affection to the government, and their conformity to the doctrines and discipline of the Church of England." These testimonials were to be signed by the Bishop of the diocese in which they resided, or "by three persons of credit and note," and these persons were again to be directly consulted by the managers appointed by the Society; and, finally, the missionary himself was required to read prayers and preach before them."

The missionary having been thus received, very explicit and solemn directions were given to him as to the ordering of his life and manners. He was di-

rected to "take especial care to give no offence to the civil government, by interfering in affairs not relating to his own calling and function;" and to treat opposers only in the spirit of meekness and gentleness. He was required to "embrace every fair opportunity of preaching even to small congregations, on week-days as well as Sundays;" to dwell on the great fundamental doctrines of Christianity, and the duties of a sober, righteous, and a godly life; to instruct the people in the nature and use of sacraments, and to be cautious in admitting persons to the reception of them; and to lay a good foundation for all his other ministrations, by diligently catechising those under his care. He was charged to "keep in mind the great design of his undertaking: which was to promote the glory of God, and the salvation of man, by propagating the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." He was reminded of the qualifications necessary, effectually to promote this design; a sincere and earnest faith, "an apostolical zeal tempered with prudence, humility, meekness and patience; a fervent charity towards the souls of men, and finally, that temperance, fortitude and constancy which become the good soldier of Christ." In order to obtain these qualifications and preserve them, he was "enjoined frequently in his retirement to offer up fervent prayers to Almighty God, for his direction and assistance, converse much with Holy Scripture, seriously to reflect on his ordination vows, and consider the account which he was to render at the last

day." Truly, these requisitions are of a most solemn character, and well calculated to make even the faithful missionary tremble, in view of his fearful responsibilities.

When it was known in the Colonies, that the Society had completed its organization, and was ready for operation, petitions were immediately sent from various and unexpected quarters, for the "great blessing of a Christian ministry." "There was a strife," the record says, "very agreeable to the Society; and now, they promised themselves, that their labor would not be in vain, nor their honorable benefactor's charity like water spilt upon the ground." The applications were continued with an earnestness and urgency that must have awakened feelings of deepest regret on the part of the Society from their inability to meet them. From the far South, as well as North, memorials were forwarded, which proved the intensity of the feelings which prompted them. They cannot now be read without tears. They would melt a heart of stone. They are written with dignity, and yet with every evidence of the most earnest sincerity. A petition from one point, assures the Society of "their great necessity, and that nothing is so dear to them as their holy religion." Others promise "to receive their missionary with the tenderest affection, to encourage his pious labors, to protect his person, to revere his authority and to improve by his instructions." After his arrival, they return "their grateful acknowledgments to the Pre-

sident and members of the Society, for their pious care in sending them a minister so exemplary and blameless, whose sweetness of temper, diligence in his calling, and soundness of doctrine, have so much conduced to promote the great end of his mission."

A petition from West Jersey, begins thus: "Very venerable gentlemen, a poor, unhappy people, settled by God's providence to procure by labor and industry a subsistence for our families, make bold to apply ourselves to God, through your charitable Society." They continue in this strain in a letter of some length, expressing their thanks to God for the supply of their bodily wants, and asking for spiritual food "in the name of a common Lord and Master and gracious Redeemer." At the close, they promise to yield to the minister who shall be sent among them, "all encouragement according to their abilities, and due respect and obedience to his holy office, instructions and person."

The Society now commenced its operations. The machinery put in motion, by faith and love began to work, and ere long the colonies of this western world were dotted with missionary stations. Faithful men were laboring each at his appointed post, humbly striving to awaken among the ignorant and debased, the principles and motives of the heavenly life. The narratives of many of the earliest missionaries, as well as of their successors, contain affecting records of their pure devotion, of their constancy and firmness in duty, of their faith in Christ, and love for

the souls of men. As we run the eye down the margin of the page, which records their labors of love, we find a wonderful similarity in their histories. We read, Rev. Mr. B. is sent to such a place. A little lower down, the marginal reference says, "he is very diligent in his mission." On the next page, the note is simply, "He dies." Two Welsh towns in Pennsylvania ask for a missionary. "The Rev. Mr. Club was sent. The people received him kindly, and soon began the erection of a church." He is described as "very earnest in all parts of his duty, very successful in his labors, and happy in engaging the love and esteem of all his people. But the care of his two churches engaged him in great fatigue, not only on account of the distance between the two places, but because of the extremity of the weather whether hot or cold, which soon put an end to his life." His church-wardens wrote to the Society, expressing their grief at their loss, and their sense of the hardness he endured. "He was the first," said they, "to undertake the care of the two places, and he paid dear for it," for he sunk under the great fatigue of riding between the two churches, twenty miles distant, "in such dismal ways and weather as we generally have four months in the year."

In the Carolinas the missionaries were driven from their post by a sudden incursion of the Indians. They fled from their burning dwellings and churches, with their afflicted and suffering people, and in several instances died in the midst of these severest tri-

als. One, who was for four months laboring to comfort and sustain his broken-hearted parishioners, crowded together in a beleagured garrison, thus writes to the Society: "Having hitherto lived among them in prosperity, I could not in conscience desert them in times of danger and distress; that so I might learn them by example as well as doctrine, to submit with cheerfulness to the will of God." He died soon after.

Let us take another page, almost at random. The Rev. Mr. Jenkins was sent into Delaware, and soon after the commencement of his labors, in 1705, he wrote to the Society that there was great earnestness in religion, and that "he should soon be able to send a joyful account of his labors." Five months after that he died. "He died," said his vestry to the Society, "to our unspeakable grief and loss, and we must do that justice to his memory, as to assure the Honorable Society that he behaved himself, both as to his doctrine and his life, as became the sacred character he bore; and God did so bless his labors, that before he died, he saw our Church in a flourishing condition."*

These records of the Society are full of such proofs

* There was no such mortality among our own missionaries on the coast of Africa, though our Church has lost some precious lives there. When, on this account, it was proposed to abandon the mission, our own Bishop of large missionary heart, instantly said no. What if the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel had distrusted God, and called His faithful children back to easier toil at home?

of the pure motives, simple manners and primitive faith of its missionaries. It required good men and true, to contend with such difficulties, and to engage in such holy labors, far away from home and kindred and friends. It would not be a selfish, or craven spirited, or self-indulgent man, who would say, "Here am I, send me." It would be the man who was seeking "another country, a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." It would be the man of faith, the man of prayer, the man of love.

I will not detain you, brethren, any longer by reference to the earlier operations of the Society, except by a simple allusion, in passing, to that page of the record which briefly touches ourselves. In the year 1704, Rev. Mr. Brook was sent as missionary to Elizabethtown, and by advice of Lord Cornbury, who was the Governor of the province, he extended his labors into the adjoining regions. The record says: "Mr. Brook was exceeding diligent in his cure, and was pleased to find the best of all sorts of people coming over to the Church of England. He exerted himself, and at times used to perform divine service at seven different places, fifty miles in extent, namely: at Elisabethtown, *Rawway*, Perth Amboy, Chesquakes, Piscataway, Rocky Hill, and in a congregation at Pages. This duty was very difficult and laborious. He used to catechise and expound fourteen times a month, this obliged him to be on horseback almost every day, which was expensive as well as very toilsome to him. However, this diligence

raised a very zealous spirit in many of the people. Several churches were commenced, but in the third year of his labors, Mr. Brook died, very much lamented by his people then, and remembered with much honor several years after his death, in a letter from the Church members to the Society, thanking them for sending another missionary to succeed our worthy and never to be forgotten pastor, Mr. Brook, whose labors afforded to us universal satisfaction."

Such is the recorded history, brethren, of Rahway's first faithful missionary. "Never to be forgotten!" Who remembers him? Where is tradition? Where are the old men with failing vision and tottering steps? Can *they* tell us, what their fathers told them? Or is it all lost! Who can lead me to his grave? Is there no monumental stone to tell us where sleeps his sacred dust? This man, of journies oft, of weariness and painfulness, of daily preaching and teaching, and praying for the souls of whom he was to give account; this man who shames us of these degenerate days; this man whose ministry God extinguished almost as soon as its light began! Never to be forgotten! Aye, never to be forgotten! He is not forgotten! Not to speak of records imperishable on high, he is not forgotten here. He is remembered to-day. Who shall say that we, as a congregation, owe nothing to his labors? We at least may rejoice that where he toiled and wept this edifice has he built, and this congregation gathered within its walls; where the same holy services which were dear to

him, are also dear to us. And here, as we unite in holy prayer, or hymns of praise, or in blessed sacraments, we will remember the missionary of ages long gone by. He shall not be forgotten. Our children and children's children, shall hear his name, and learn from the brief story of his life and labors, what it is which the love of Christ can do.

And so we might give you illustration of the piety and zeal of the missionaries of this Society, in every diocese where their labors were bestowed. What is so emphatically true in regard to her earliest missionaries, has no doubt been true, as a general thing, all through the history of 150 years. There is not enough of worldly promise in the missionary enterprise to allure the worldly; it must therefore be that those who go, are the unselfish and unworldly, men willing to deny themselves and follow Christ. What a record then should we have, could we gather into one volume all that the missionaries of this Society have done and suffered, since its labors first began! Its resources have increased with the progress of time, and so in proportion has the number of its laborers. Its dead are in every region and in every clime. They rest beneath the snows of Labrador, they lie side by side with the fishermen of Newfoundland, by the inhabitants of Sierra Leone, by the poor convict of New South Wales, by the wretched pariahs on the banks of the Ganges, by the cannibals of New Zealand. They sleep with the poor

mariners, whose requiem is the ever sounding sea ;* and they lie with our own dead, by the sides of our fathers, in peaceful and honored graves. But did we know *all* that they have felt and done and suffered; could we read as they felt of hope deferred, of trials of faith, of sufferings of body, and sickness of heart, and trembling for fear of savage or unreasonable men; or again, could we witness the victories of their faith, their gladness in success, their triumph over the powers of evil, and their joy as they gathered the lambs into the eternal fold, what a record should we have, what wisdom should we gain, what a lesson should we read! Oh! it would wean us from the world. It would endue us with patience. It would nerve us with strength. It would inflame us with zeal. It would bind us to Christ.

Or could we go now to the 450 stations where the living missionaries are this day watching for souls, abundant in labors, in preaching and prayers, seeking to bring souls to Christ from the midst of a "miserable and sinful world," we might also receive instruction that would make us wiser and better. The sun which now pours its beams on us has this day awakened the missionaries of this Society on the shores of China, by the slopes of the Hymalaiah,

> "On many an ancient river,
> On many a palmy plain,"

* Rev. Mr. Thoroughgood Moor was their first missionary to the Iroquois Indians, a mission very dear to the Society. Mr. Moor, with a whole ship's crew, perished at sea. Hist. Acct. p. 291.

in the vallies of Australia, at Cape Town, at Sierra Leone, and in all the provinces of America which own the British sway; and as its bright orb shall sink beneath the waves of the Pacific, the missionary on its shores will catch its last gleam, as he lifts up his heart and voice in praise and prayer.

Such, brethren, is a mere glimpse, which this occasion permits us to take of the past and of the present. Let us pause a moment before we dwell on the possibilities of the future. This anniversary presents a point of peculiar interest and meaning to the Churchman. The Society of which we have been speaking belongs to our own branch of the Church of Christ, to the Church of England, to the Episcopal Church, in this country, which are all one and the same thing. It is lawful for a man to love his Church, to rejoice in her prosperity, and especially to be glad when he sees in her the zeal and faith which are true notes of the Church of Christ. He may do this on the best of principles, while he feels a sincere charity towards those who follow other forms of worship, and may wish them God speed in every work of love. So would we do to-day. The Church of our affections might have begun her missionary labor at an earlier day. She ought to have done so. But when we remember the difficulties she had to contend with, and the furious enemies that assailed from within and without; the infidelity that stalked in high places, and spurned her holiest truths; the Popish Jesuit undermining her walls,

and sapping her foundations; and then the Independents and the Puritans, with bold Cromwell at their head, thundering at her gates; we see that she was fully occupied at home. Even then, however, had she kindled in her strong towers the missionary light, its moral power would have done more than anything else to awe the infidel, to unnerve the Jesuit, and to soothe even the exasperated Puritan. It was reserved for the reign of William, after the final expulsion of the Stuarts, when she had peace in her borders, and knew her strength, to put on her garments of faith, and to robe herself in raiments of love. Then she stood forth, first and foremost in the Protestant world, and declared it to be her duty to seek the lost sheep of the flock, and to gather together, in the love of Christ, all the poor and perishing "in each remotest nation." As a prudential measure, she confined her labors to the colonies of Great Britain; for as she could not do every thing, she attempted to do what she could in the best manner, and sought to secure, by the best human arrangements, a sound and permanent improvement, among the children of men. Here, then, there is sufficient ground for our joy and gladness to-day. The Church, we knew, was armed with evangelical truth, and blessed with apostolic order; but we did not know, so well as now, that she had shown so truly the spirit of primitive and apostolic days. We have no reason to be ashamed of her; but on the contrary, every reason to rejoice, in her worship, her order, her

liturgy, in her doctrines and sacraments; and now, more than ever, in her past eventful history, and in her deeds of piety and love.

It is in this connection, that we may properly call to mind, that such men as Schwartz, and Gericke, and others, were sustained in India by the benevolence and missionary zeal of the Church of England. They were Danes and Germans, but they were inflamed with an unquenchable love for souls, and they offered themselves to the Church, and she sent them. How faithfully they toiled amid the swarming multitudes of India, how prudently they acted, how successful they were, and how intensely they were beloved, the world knows. What moral power did Schwartz possess, when Hyder Ally, the great Indian warrior, at the head of 100,000 men, stopped as he drew near the scene of his labors, and said, "respect the good Mr. Schwartz; he is a holy man," and the undisciplined host obeyed him? What sweet and holy memories of him still live, when missionaries of every name, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist, as they kneel in prayer on those distant shores, ask of God that they may be clothed with the mantle of Schwartz? "But the time would fail me to tell," of Schultz, of Grundler, of Ziegenbalg, of Buchanan, of Corrie, of Middleton, of Martyn, of Thomason, of Heber, of all "the holy and humble men of heart," who through faith subdued kingdoms, "wrought righteousness and obtained the promises, stopped the mouths of lions."

There is one most interesting feature in the earlier history of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which I feel constrained to press upon your attention. Its missionaries and its founders were very decided Churchmen, but they were what would now be called *moderate Churchmen.* The assumptions of some of the present day, the vagaries of those who doat on a sacramental system, they did not know, they did not teach. They loved their Church for the purity of her doctrines, and for the correspondence of her order and worship with primitive antiquity; but they did not unchurch those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.* In this spirit they humbly and perseveringly labored, and planted strong and deep the foundations of a Church, which God may indeed afflict, but which he can never desert.

Well then may we rejoice over the past and the present, and look forward to the future in the fullness of hope. Witness to-day the diffusion of our Episcopacy—that Episcopacy which the Moravian prays God "to keep precious before him,"—see our own Bishop in China, another about to be consecrated for Africa—the Bishops of the Church of England in all her colonies; and in connection with this, our liturgy translated into so many languages, and equally diffused with the Bishops, the Clergy, and the Church; and what may we not hope for? Who

* See Note A, at the end.

shall set limits to the earnest expectation of our hearts? Why shall not the children of the Church see, in days to come, the "brightness of her glory" girdling the world, and binding all nations together, and to herself, in the bonds of her primitive order, her heavenly worship, her evangelical doctrine, and her diffusive love? Oh, may she ever have our sincerest efforts and most earnest prayers.

There are many other interesting considerations suggested by this occasion, but we must reserve them for another time. Let me only remark, that to-day we have to *act*, as well as feel. We owe a debt of gratitude to our pious forefathers, and we can do something to repay it. We can cultivate their devotion. We can imitate their labors. We can give to those who are to come after us. We can give of our abundance; we can give of our poverty. What vast fields are open to us in the West! Let us show that we thankfully appreciate our blessings.

"Saviour, we own this debt of love,
Oh, shed thy Spirit from above,
To move each Christian breast,
Till heralds shall thy truth proclaim,
And temples rise to fix thy name
Through all our desert West!"

UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

APPENDIX.

Note A.

New-Rochelle was settled by French Protestants. It is in West Chester Parish. The Rev. Mr. Bondet, a French clergyman, officiated, and was for several years supported only by voluntary contributions of the people and a small allowance of £30 from the New-York government. At first he did not use the English Liturgy, but the French Prayers which are used in the *Protestant Churches in France.* But about the year 1709, the people generally conformed to the Church of England, and applied to the Society for an allowance for their minister. Mr. Bondet was recommended by some gentlemen of that country to be their minister. He had the character of a good, sober man, and more especially useful there because he could preach in English as well as in French. The Society appointed Mr. Bondet a salary as a missionary, but directed him to use only the Church of England Liturgy. He did so, and the people generally conformed to him, as they signified they would.—*Dr. Humphrey's Hist. Acct. of S. P. G.*, p. 207.

The Society also extended assistance to the French ministers in South Carolina, at the time of the Indian depredations.

"The people in East Chester were generally of the Presbyterian persuasion, till Mr. Barton came among them in the year 1703; they embraced the Church of England worship and received him for their minister."—*Hist. Acct.*, p. 206.

Syracuse, N. Y.
PAT. JAN 21, 1908

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